

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00674 151012Z  
ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00  
SP-02 L-01 PM-03 DODE-00 PRS-01 IO-06 /045 W  
-----151029Z 045838 /15

R 150923Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3067  
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0674

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, LE  
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S INITIAL CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER

1. SUMMARY. DURING THE AMBASSADOR'S 45-MINUTE INITIAL CALL, LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS DISCUSSED THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION IN LEBANON, INCLUDING THE DESIRE OF SOME ELEMENTS FOR PARTITION, AND THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN LEBANON. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR MADE INITIIAL CALL ON GOL FONMIN CHIEF OF PROTOCOL AND FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS MORNING FEB 14. DURING 45-MINUTE CONVERSATION WITH BOUTROS, AMBAASSADOR REITERATED REMARKS HE HAD MADE TO THE PRESS ON ARRIVAL EXPRESSING PLEASURE AT RETURNING TO LEBANON AND DESIRE OF USG TO SUPPORT PRESIDENT SARKIS IN RESTORING SECURITY AND PROSPERITY TO LEBANON. BOUTROS WELCOMED THE AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL AND SAID GOL WAS COUNTING ON USG ASSISTANCE IN DIFFICULT DAYS AHEAD.

3. CONTACTS IN LEBANON. AMBASSADOR SAID HE PLANNED RENEW CONTACTS WITH A WIDE SPECTRUM OF LEBANESE PERSONALITIES HE HAD MET DURING HIS PREVIOUS SERVICE  
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HERE. WAS THERE ANYONE GOL WOULD PREFER HE NOT SEE? BOUTROS SAID HE THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD IDEA FOR HIM TO SEE EVERYONE, BUT HE SHOULD TREAT OLD POLS AS PRIVATE CITIZENS. DURING THE 12 MONTHS FROM NOVEMBER 1975 TO NOVEMBER 1976 THERE HAD BEEN A VACUUM OF OFFICIAL POWER IN LEBANON. DURING THIS PERIOD MANY LEBANESE POLITICAL PERSONALITIES BEHAVED AS THOUGH THEY SPOKE

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON. NOW THIS TIME WAS ENDED AND LEBANON HAD A CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. THE FOREIGN MINISTER THEREFORE HOPED THAT THE AMBASSADOR DURING HIS CALLS WOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT HE WAS VISITING THESE MEN AS REPRESENTATIVES OF CERTAIN POLITICAL TENDENCIES IN LEBANON BUT NOT AS THE POSSESSORS OF ANY OFFICIAL AUTHORITY. THIS, HE SAID, WOULD HELP TO DISCOURAGE MOVES TOWARDS PARTITION. BOUTROS SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW PARTITION WAS NOT A VIABLE OPTION FOR LEBANON BECAUSE THE RESULTING ENTITY WOULD BE AN ALIEN GHETTO, CREATED AGAINST THE WISHES OF THE SURROUNDING COUNTRIES AND EVEN MORE ISOLATED THAN ISRAEL. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES IT COULD NOT SURVIVE AND WOULD BE A DESTABILIZING FACTOR IN AREA. IN FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIEW, NOTHING SHOULD BE DONE AT THIS CRUCIAL MOMENT WHICH WOULD UPSET THE EQUILIBRIUM IN THE AREA.

4. CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE ATTITUDES OF THE KFU FRONT CHRISTIANS, BOUTROS IMPLIED THAT SOME OF THEM APPEAR TO BE SUPPORTING PARTITION AS A NEGOTIATING TACTIC BUT A MINORITY HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT IT IS A VIABLE OPTION. THIS MINORITY, HE SAID, IS ENCOURAGED IN THIS BELIEF BECAUSE THEY THINK THEY HAVE THE BACKING OF THE UNITED STATES. THE FOREIGN MINISTER AGAIN MENTIONED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT PRIVATELY WITH SECRETARY VANCE, DURING THE SECRETARY'S FORTHCOMING VISIT.

5. SOUTHERN LEBANON. IN A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF SOUTHERN

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LEBANON, THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE BELIEVED THAT THE GOL HAD TAKEN A VERY COURAGEOUS AND WISE DECISION IN WITHDRAWING ASF TROOPS TO ASHIYAH. HE EXPRESSED REGRET AT WAY MATTER HAD BEEN LEAKED BY ISRAELIS, BUT NOTED THAT ISRAELIS USUALLY LEAKY. BOUTROS REPLIED THAT THIS ACTION HAD COST PRESIDENT SARKIS A GREAT DEAL OF HIS CREDIT WITH THE SYRIANS, ADDING: "WE CAN'T DO THIS SORT OF THING EVERY WEEK." BOUTROS SAID SITUATION IN THE SOUTH WAS AFFECTED BY ACTIONS OF PALESTINIANS AND BY DE FACTO ALLIANCE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SOME CHRISTIAN FORCES. HE AGAIN ASKED THAT WE USE OUR INFLUENCE WITH THE ISRAELIS 1) TO PREVENT THEM FROM STIRRING UP TROUBLE ON THE BORDER, AND 2) TO PERSUADE THEM TO RESTRAIN THEIR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS. IN DISCUSSING THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING A LEBANESE FORCE TO ESTABLISH SECURITY IN THE AREA, BOUTROS REPEATED THAT THIS WAS A DIFFICULT TASK. TO USE A LEBANESE FORCE THAT HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN THE RECENT FIGHTING WOULD CREATE MORE PROBLEMS THAN IT WOULD SOLVE, BECAUSE ONE FACTION OR

ANOTHER WOULD BE BOUND TO SEE IT AS A CHALLENGE.

6. COMMENT: THE FOREIGN MINISTER WAS FRANK AND OPEN  
IN HIS DISCUSSION OF LEBANON'S PROBLEMS AND OBVIOUSLY  
WELCOMED THE RETURN OF AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO  
LEBANON.

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009